

Board of Selectmen's meeting
February 27, 2013

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein; Selectman David Muller; Selectman Dennis Tracey; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito; Residents.

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. Copies are available in the Selectmen's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at 7:35pm

Pledge of Allegiance-

Discussion/decision regarding a Technology lease agreement approval request from the Board of Education- Jo-Ann Keating. Ms. Weinstein verified that the items were already purchased and this is a reimbursable lease. In the current year's budget, we approved a certain amount for the funding of technology, and the lease total is \$66,000 over that amount. Ms. Keating said that there were needs that came up during the course of the school year and a decision was made to put that in the lease.

Mr. Muller moved to authorize the First Selectman to sign the lease documents with Global Strategic LLC for the purchase of school technology equipment. The Board of Education will be responsible for lease payments. He further moved that they approve the Resolution and Declaration of Official Intent also to the successful negotiation of an amended lease as per comments received from Town Attorney. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the Board of Selectmen's review and transmittal of the Board of Education's budget to the Board of Finance. Mr. Muller asked if anyone got the information about the activities stipends, regarding payments to parents. Ms. Weinstein said that she knows that parents do get paid. Mr. Muller said he did not think that it was fair and equitable. Something that has been done for one specific activity should be applied equally to all activities or not at all. Mr. Tracey said he agreed with Mr. Muller and asked that the Board of Education consider this for next year.

Ms. Weinstein complimented the Board of Education on the budget, and said she did not want to make any program cuts, and it was important that they have the funding available to move forward with those programs. However, she looked through last year's budget and they actually spent \$249,295 dollars less than what was budgeted. The differential between what is the expected spend for the current fiscal year and the request for the next fiscal year is \$955,771. The percent increase from expected to requested is still relatively low and comes in at 2% but if you add in next year's cost reductions in savings of \$570,000 you come up with a differential of \$1,526,312. If you subtract the fixed personnel costs, there is still an increase in the budget of \$473,972 over last year available for discretionary spending. That is a substantial increase.

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Ms. Weinstein said there is \$30,000 in their budget for drug and alcohol counseling. We have those services available in other settings, and she wonders what the responsibility is on the district or the Town to provide the drug and alcohol counseling when there are outside sources that we can refer them too.

Ms. Weinstein said she cannot accept \$10,000 for flat screen TV's for the Middle School Library. This doesn't have an impact on the academic excellence that they are trying to provide. She is also concerned with the technology budget, in general. An additional \$65,000 was spent over what was budgeted for the current year. Another concern is the amount of software and hardware for administration, and not specifically for student use.

The other issue Ms. Weinstein has is with the contingency teacher. Practice has been that salaries for unused teachers are returned to the Town for discussion with the Board of Finance. For the past number of years, Board of Finance has turned around and said to use that money for School capital projects so that we can put that money back in the school system. The school used that money for other purposes, including hiring of security specialists, and the problem she has, is that the discussion did not happen with the Board of Finance. She felt that there were also opportunities to reduce FTEs in other areas. Ms. Weinstein asked to pull out the contingency teacher from the budget, but she would only do that if the other Selectmen guaranteed that if truly needed, the Board will appropriate the funds for that teacher. The Selectmen agreed.

Mr. Tracey said he appreciates the fact that our increase is less than other Towns but he still thinks that the community deserves an explanation and a written plan as to how we are going to change the trend from annually increasing appropriation with a decreasing enrollment. It is a problem we have in our Town, we all recognize it and he thinks there are good faith efforts to confront it, but until there is a 2 or 3 year plan to really identify how we can reduce our facilities expenses, he thinks the community is rightfully concerned that we are not taking it seriously.

Ms. Weinstein said she added the cost for the contingency teacher, the drug and alcohol program and the \$10,000 for the flat screen TV's it comes out to be about \$101,000. She said she would round it to a \$100,000 reduction in the board of Education budget request.

Mr. Muller moved to approve a Board of Education Operating Budget in the amount of \$46,193,668. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding accepting a gift from the Weston Gun Club Community Foundation of \$11,717.02 to purchase protective equipment for police officers- John Troxell. Jess DiPasquale said that they are asking the board to approve a gift of \$11,717.02 from the Weston Gun Club for protective equipment that they feel is needed and would not be able to afford otherwise. Ms. Weinstein said that she is appreciative of the Weston Gun Club. They have been incredibly generous and supportive of what the Board was trying to do with the gun ordinance changes.

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Mr. Tracey moved to approve a gift of \$11,717.02 from the Weston Gun Club Community Foundation to purchase protective equipment for police officers. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/decision regarding the Board of Selectmen's review and transmittal of the First Selectmen's budget to the Board of Finance. Ms. Weinstein went through the budget.

Mr. Muller moved to amend the budget for 144, Tax Collector to a First Selectmen's request of \$100,534. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Muller moved to amend the Land Use budget request to \$343,189. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

On the Fire Department budget Mr. Tracey said that he originally thought that we did not have sufficient information to fully evaluate it and he asked for additional information from the Fire Department and they agreed to provide it. Based on that agreement he is prepared to go forward with this number. The second issue he had is he thinks we should be budgeting the Fire Department by line item, the same way we do with everyone else in the Town. Ms. Weinstein said that she didn't have a problem figuring out a percentage that works. Her problem is that we give them quarterly payments; they are a 501(c)3, so technically we are making contributions to them..

Mr. Muller asked if we should rethink the way we approach the fire department and approach it like we do the Board of Education where they are giving us a number but the expenditures within that number is their decision. Ms. Weinstein said they do give us a number. Mr. Tracey said he thinks there is a lack of discipline in the way we approach it and that is part of the reason he asked for additional information. He would like to continue to pursue that, but he is comfortable with the overall number.

Mr. Tracey moved to amend the First Selectmen's request for Youth Services to \$41,834. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Muller moved to amend the First Selectman's request for account 750, Senior Services to \$114,556. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Muller asked about Parks and Fields and the breakdown of seven months full time and five months layoff. Ms. Weinstein said they met with Dave Ungar and they are comfortable with keeping the budget number in the budget. They spoke about the potential for flexibility and will have conversation with the bargaining unit going forward.

Mr. Muller moved to approve a Town Operating budget for FY2013-2014 in the amount of \$11,690,441. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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Mr. Tracey moved to amend the First Selectmen's Capital Budget account number 978, line 55 to \$50,000 which results in a total of \$1,116, 228. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Muller moved that we approve a total Debt Service of \$6,554,632. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously

Discussion/decision regarding the appointment of Woody Bliss as the moderator for the Annual Town Budget Meeting. Mr. Tracey moved to appoint Woody Bliss as the moderator for the Annual Town Budget Meeting. Mr. Muller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion regarding amendments to the current firearms ordinance- Mr. Muller said that he wanted to be sure that under definitions that the definition under "Immediate Family" is in line with State Law. Ms. Weinstein said she would talk to Town Attorney about it. This will be the document that goes to the public hearing that we scheduled for March 21, 2013.

Open Items

Updates

Grants- Gayle Weinstein- No new news

Personnel Handbook- Will be on the next agenda

Any other business to come properly before the meeting. – Mr. Muller said he wanted to publicly commend the mothers and women who organized Weston's participation for March for Change.

Discussion/approval of the Board of Selectmen's meeting minutes of February 7, 2013- Tabled to the next Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Executive Session- Town Hall Employees Contract Negotiation

At 8:35pm Mr. Muller made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the Town Hall Employees Contract Negotiations. Mr. Tracey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

ATTENDANCE: The meeting was convened at 8:41 pm in the First Selectman's Office by Chairman Weinstein, with Selectmen Muller and Tracey present. Also in attendance was Town Administrator Tom Landry.

DISCUSSION: The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the tentative agreement reached with the Town Hall bargaining unit for the July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013 period.

No votes were taken.

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ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 9:21 pm, a motion (David Muller, Dennis Tracey second) to adjourn executive session and resume in open session passed unanimously.

AGREEMENT APPROVAL: A motion (Dennis Tracey motion, David Muller second) to approve the tentative agreement between the Town of Weston and Town Hall Employees Local 866, AFSCME council 4, dated January 17, 2013 passed by unanimous vote.

ADJOURN: At 9:24 pm, a motion to adjourn (Dennis Tracey, David Muller second) passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted

Judy M. DeVito
Administrative Assistant
Approved 3/21/13